

California Department of Health Services

Occupational Blood Lead Registry

Reporting Requirements

Legislation in 1986 created a statewide system for tracking lead poisoning cases in children and adults in California (California Health and Safety Code Section 124130). **Laboratories are required to report electronically all blood lead levels (BLLs) for persons tested in California to the California Department of Health Services (CDHS).** Information on the **person** tested, their **employer**, the **provider** ordering the test, the **analyzing laboratory**, and the **result** are reported to CDHS. BLLs 10 ug/dl or greater must be reported within 3 working days; BLLs less than 10 ug/dl must be reported within 30 calendar days.

For the system to be effective, information on the individual (birth date, home address, name and address of employer) must be obtained at the time the blood specimen is collected and must be reported to the analyzing laboratory (see Page 4). Medical providers ordering BLL tests and referring laboratories should ensure that complete information is gathered and forwarded to the analyzing laboratory with the blood sample.

OLPPP's Mandates

The Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OLPPP) was established by the 1991 Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (California Health and Safety Code §105185 - 105195). Mandated activities include the following:

- maintaining the Occupational Blood Lead Registry;
- investigating reported cases of occupational lead poisoning to ensure that workers receive appropriate medical care, that workplace hazards are corrected, and that household members at risk for "take-home" exposure are identified and referred to the local health department;
- investigating cases where children or family members of workers are poisoned by lead brought home from the workplace ("take-home" exposure);
- educating employers, employees and health professionals about prevention of occupational lead poisoning; and
- making recommendations for the prevention of lead poisoning.

Registry Management

OLPPP manages reports for adults aged 16 and over who are occupationally exposed to lead and provides in-depth case management for workers with seriously elevated BLLs and take-home exposures. Case management for children under 21 years and for non-occupationally exposed adults (to the extent resources allow) is done by the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch (CLPPB) and local health departments' Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (CLPP) Programs.

Blood Lead Level Reports

OLPPP requires complete patient, employer, physician, sample and laboratory information. Missing information is obtained by contacting the laboratory, the medical provider or the employer. BLLs 40 µg/dl or greater are verified for occupational exposure and referred immediately for OLPPP case management. Reports for non-occupational adult cases are forwarded to CLPPB.

OLPPP Case Management

Registry

Protocols 1) Workers with BLL of 50 µg/dl or greater

The worker, employer, and physician are interviewed by phone using standardized questionnaires as outlined below:

Worker

OLPPP contacts the worker to address his or her concerns about the BLL report, to learn about the workplace and work practices, and to identify household members and co-workers at risk. A packet of information is mailed to the worker's home. Names of any children under 6 years old or pregnant/nursing women in the household are forwarded to CLPPB for follow-up by the local health department.

If the worker's BLL is less than 80 µg/dl and the test is not employer-sponsored, consent is obtained from the worker to contact the employer. Worker and co-worker BLLs continue to be monitored via the Occupational Blood Lead Registry.

Employer

OLPPP contacts the employer to review the company's lead safety measures and to provide assistance in addressing workplace hazards. A letter outlining specific recommendations with a timeline for improvements and a packet of information are sent to the employer. Where the Cal/OSHA lead standards require Medical Removal Protection (MRP)*, OLPPP ensures that the worker is removed immediately from further lead exposure, and that the worker receives proper follow-up medical care and full medical removal protection benefits.

OLPPP is not an enforcement or regulatory agency. OLPPP's policy is to work cooperatively with employers to improve lead safety. However, employers who do not voluntarily correct serious health and safety hazards may be referred to Cal/OSHA for enforcement action.

Physician

Physicians who provide care for workers with BLLs 50 µg/dl or greater are contacted by OLPPP to review the case and to provide information and assistance.

***Medical Removal Protection (MRP)** is the temporary removal from lead work to protect the health of the worker. The Cal/OSHA lead standards require that an employer must remove a worker from his or her usual work with lead under two conditions:

- A)** the worker has a seriously elevated blood lead level [*BLL 50 µg/dl or greater under the Lead in Construction Standard; single BLL 60 µg/dl or greater or average BLL 50 µg/dl or greater under the General Industry Lead Standard*];
- B)** whenever a physician determines a worker has symptoms associated with lead toxicity or a medical condition that places him or her at increased health risk.

The physician may allow the worker, if physically able, to work in an area or task where air lead levels are less than 30 µg/m³. If such work is not available, the worker must receive full salary and benefits while off work. MRP is a medical decision.

2) Suspected or Confirmed Take-Home Exposure

If a child and a worker in a household each have a BLL 10 µg/dl or greater and a workplace source of lead has been identified, a take-home investigation is conducted. OLPPP interviews the identified worker and then the employer to review worker hygiene measures necessary to prevent carrying lead dust home and assess other improvements needed in the lead safety program. Every effort is made to protect the identity of the worker if there is concern about reprisal. The local health department evaluates the home situation, assists with blood lead testing for household members and medical follow-up as needed, and educates the family about cleanup of lead contamination in the home and prevention measures.

OLPPP informs the employer about the requirements of the Cal/OSHA lead standards and recommends BLL testing for all workers who may be exposed to lead. The workers are advised to have their children tested for lead and given resource information. OLPPP makes specific written recommendations to the employer with a timeline for correcting identified workplace hazards including the practices that resulted in lead being carried home by the workers. Failure by the employer to adequately address OLPPP's recommendations may result in a referral to Cal/OSHA for enforcement action.

3) Workers with BLLs 10 to 49 µg/dl

OLPPP sends a monthly mailing to local health department CLPP Programs for voluntary follow-up of workers to encourage BLL testing of their children and provide resource information.

In addition, OLPPP sends workers with BLLs 40 to 49 µg/dl a letter and packet of information on lead poisoning and how to prevent it, lead hazards, take-home exposure, employer responsibilities, and resources regarding worker legal rights. If the BLL was not done as part of an employer-sponsored medical program, OLPPP requests the worker's consent before sending a similar letter and packet of educational materials to the employer. Clinicians are sent a letter and packet of information on a one-time basis.

4) Two BLLs 15 µg/dl or greater, or one BLL 20 µg/dl or greater, aged 16 to 21 years

Case follow-up for elevated BLL associated with occupational exposure or exposure of unknown origin is conducted by local health department CLPP Programs in collaboration with OLPPP.

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For more information, contact us:

Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

850 Marina Bay Parkway

Building P, 3rd Floor

Richmond, CA 94804

(866) 627-1587 (toll-free number for California callers)

(510) 620-5743 (fax)

www.dhs.ca.gov/ohb

Lab Requisition for Blood Lead Testing (Sample)

Health care providers ordering blood lead level (BLL) tests can fill out this sheet and attach it to the Lab Requisition Form.

A. Patient Information

Last Name First Name M.I.

Date of Birth Age (Years) ☐ Male ☐ Female

Patient Address (number, street) Apt. Number

City

State ZIP Code Telephone Number Social Security Number (voluntary)

First and Last Name of Parent or Guardian (if person tested is a minor)

B. Employer Information (Employer of the person tested, at the time of the test)

Name of Employer ☐ Self-Employed ☐ Not Employed

Employer Address (number, street) Suite Number

City

State ZIP Code Telephone Number Fax

C. Ordering Health Care Provider

Name of Provider Group, Clinic or Facility

First and Last Name of Individual Health Care Provider ☐ MD ☐ DO ☐ NP ☐ PA

Provider Address (number, street) Suite Number

City

State ZIP Code Telephone Number Fax